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Fagots of Cedar

IVAN SWIFT



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FAGOTS OF CEDAR

OUT OF THE NORTH &
BLOWN BY THE WINDS

*With Photographs and Original Drawings of
Michigan Landscape*

By IVAN SWIFT



DESIGNED and Printed by the AUTHOR, A. D. 1907
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INSCRIBED TO MY MOTHER AND DEDICATED
TO HER CAUSE OF SERVICE TO THE HUMBLE.

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C O N T E N T S

IN MICHIGAN

Illustrated ✓

Home

Song of the Cedar-maker

" ✓

Stage of the Woods

The Old Courier-de-Bois

The Hunted Ones

The Timber-Wolves

Gods of the Ki-jik-on

" ✓

The Plaint of the Brook-trout

The Pleasure of the Hour

The Woodman to the River

" ✓

Sprite of the Po-tog-on-og

Seal of the North ✓

To a Grosbeak in the Garden

The Humming-bird

Autumn

The Coprid Beetle

Call of the Winds

Liberty Bell

Japan the Beautiful

The Dragon City

" ✓

The Pilgrim

After the Troublous Winds

This Book has been designed, hand-set and illustrated by the A u t h o r, and the press-work done by John Hamilton, from Vickers-town, *Ireland*. The EDITION is limited to Two HUNDRED copies, of which *this* one is *Number 124*

— *John Sigf.* —

Out of the North



IN MICHIGAN

IN MICHIGAN

SLOW-YIELDING *Nymphs*
Evade unpandered Satyrs here,
And sands unconquered laugh at man's in-
vention;
Bright clouds drive darker shadows,
And the bay-breeze bears heavy odors—
Odor-offerings of ragged pine
And spruce.

The white-birch single on the hillside,
The hemlocks and I
Are friends
In Michigan.

Nature's fingers
Seem to play upon my strings
In minor harmonies up here—
Where shells of convents shelter
Echoes only,
And the last Indian has laid
His flints and legends
On the grave-mound of the older time
In Michigan.

H O M E

I N the evening after the rain,
At home with the North and the trees,
I turn from the world again
And find me a world in these.

I searched for a joy in the lands
Of castle and kopje and sun,
And found what I sought — in the sands
Where the journey was lightly begun.

The glories of continents seen
And all that my ears have heard,
Are lost in a garden's green
And the chirp of a nested bird.

SONG OF THE CEDAR-MAKER

DEEP is the wall of the cedar,
And tough is the take of the Jack;
But a man with a girl must feed her,
And the fire must burn in the shack.

Ax, spud, saw, steel!

Trim, mark, cut, peel!

We tackled the world and shook her—
A wench with an eye for hate;
We winked at the woods—and *took* her,
For better and bunk and plate.

CHO.

Man is a thing for labor,
Or what 's the game of the trees?
The saw is as good as the saber—
And tallies are made with these.

CHO.

Our talk ain't the regular Latin—
But we cut to the cedar's core!
Our manner 'll stand some battin'—
But we pay for our beans and more!

CHO.

Tough is the take of the cedar,
And rough is the lift of the Jack;
But a man with a wife must feed her,
And the kettle must boil in the shack.

CHO.

Continued

To *bell* with the church and the nation !
We *work* — and the scale is right ;
Sweat be our souls' salvation,
And *freedom* is *Saturday Night* !
 Wback, crack, chip, strip !
 Zim, zow, zip, zip !
 Ax, spud, saw, steel !
 CHOP ! MARK ! CUT ! PEEL !

STAGE OF THE WOODS

THE glow of the moon's low rim
Creeps up through the trees to the sky ;
And the night is a deep, sweet hymn
To the lone doe sauntering by.
A frail, lithe shape at the spring—
A quick, strange flash in the night !
A leap and a keen, hot sting !
And Death walks weird in the light.



“A man with a girl must feed her.”

THE OLD COURIER-DE-BOIS

A COMMON man was Pere Gilbert,st

So will the townsmen say,

"A sodden leaf left by the snow

Upon the summer way ; —

"A relic of the older time,

He crooned of moldy years,

Unknown to fame of good or crime—

And sleeps unmourned of tears."

And this the tribute of the world

To labor's humbler men —

"A thing the jesting winds have whirled

On earth and off again !"

What tho he spread the dauntless sail,

And quit the shame of kings —

To break the rugged forest-trail

And dwell with silent things?

What tho he turned the blades to hoes,

And tamed the savage breeds? —

We hold their homes! No bugle blows

A woodman's homely deeds.

He made a garden, sowed a seed —

But *we* have plucked the flower!

He laid the faith, we made the creed—

What boots *his* lingering hour?

Continued

No mausoleum marks his grave,
No will divides his gold ;
No pension soothes a whimpering slave,
His office none will hold.

His tomb is but the earth he trod,
His wealth—the poet's heart ;
His gift—a love for man and God,
His post—the honest part.

A common *Man* was Pere Gilbault,
And so the world must say—
“A sodden leaf left by the snow,
Upon the summer way!”

THE HUNTED ONES

THE habit of all of your mothers
Was flight from a stronger race ;—
Who knows but the zeal of our brothers
Is zest to your joy of the chase?

THE TIMBER WOLVES

WE are the wolves of the timber-land—
Me and the Black and the Bay!
We work by the day for a pittance of pay,
Pork for the man and the horses' hay!
"Slaves," you say,
"Of the skid and the sleigh!"
It's the echoed word
Of the world you've heard;
For the nags and me
Are the wind and the tree,
And *none* so free!—
We're czars of the lumberin' band!

We sound for the sun his reveille—
With the clank of the loggin'-chain,
And the bitin' pain of the frost disdain!
We warm to the work and won't complain.
Chuck your Floridy flowers!
Michigan woods for ours!
Hills of snow and a hammerin' bell!
Four thousan' scale as hard as hell!
Get up, *Jack*! Together, *Nell*!
Break your tugs!
Shake your lugs!
Your frozen steam
Is a Cuban dream,
When you sleep in the straw with me!

Continued

The *slaves* are rollin' the logs of towns !
Give 'em the card they've drawn !
The blood and brawn, and the liquor-
o'-dawn
Are enough for us—we're up and gone !
A ten-league run
Is a race with the sun !
The horses' keep,
And a cave for sleep, —
(Better a bear than a shiverin' sheep),
Meat and bread
And a blanket-bed —
And the prayers for more we leave to
clowns !

To the hags o' storm my song is hurled !
My poem 's the creak of the hick'ry rack !
The lash's crack, in the woods rung back,
Is a fire in the veins o' the Bay and Black !
How they dance,
And heave and prance !
Oh, wild and free,
We're comrades three,
Born of wind and wave !
Little to lose or save —
What of the grave ?
The boss of Care is the king of the world !



Camp Ki-jik.

THE GODS OF THE KI-JIK-ON

THE cedar is thick on the Ki-jik-on,
And a goose is the queen of the sky ;
But the king of the swamp is a Buster John,
And the getleman named is I.
The same to say I handle the rein
Of the huskies, Rock and Rob,
And make the law to the timber's pain ;—
A *king* is a man with a job !

Haw, Rob ! Hy, Rock !
Mush, Brush ! Duck your block !

We snakes the sticks from dawn to night,
And times it's under the Bear ;
It's a bunk for bed and a badger's fight,—
They's hides is made for wear.
We can't get far and we don't see much
But a hole to the top of the sky ;
They's muck enough for a grave o' such —
And we *go some*, ever we die !

Hy, Rock ! Gee, Rob !
Hump ! Jump ! Chew your cob !

PRONOUNCED *Kee-zheck-on*

Continued

They's many a stick in the "Border of Hell,"
And thank ye to leave us stay—
For I am the king and the king is well,
And the same for the Black and Bay.
The dam o' the nags has run in the clouds,
Their sire in the wind o' the sea;
And here is a laugh to the juniper shrouds,
And *luck* to the pluckiest three !

Whoa, boys ! Haw about !
Back track ! The hooter 's out.

PLAINT OF THE BROOK-TROUT

IN the unfollowed rivers of Dawn—
Of the hundreds of ages ago—
A motherhood mothered the spawn
And gave us of freedom to grow.

We lay on the golden bars
And laughed at the witless fly ;
We looked on the sun and the stars,
And they came to us out of the sky.

We drank of the spears of the rain
And wheeled in the storm-dog's ring ;
We knew of no peril or pain,
Nor feared we a wandering thing.

The Maker of water and land
Stood watch of our joy of the pool ;—
But we fell to the rod and the hand,
And our faith was the faith of the fool !

Barbed were the wings of the flies,
And meshes were laid to deceive ;
The manners of man were lies
That fish could never believe.

He came as a nature-priest,
With book—and with hook and gun ;
But the lover of beauty was least,
And the slaughter of fish was fun !

Continued

He cast our children ashore
For the greed of the bittern's beak ;
And he caught to his need and more —
Pursuing from creek to creek.

And thus were we led and decoyed,
In shallow and pool and bar ;
And thus was our faith destroyed
In mortal and sun and star !

We cherish our gift of life,
And keep from the reach of men
Till wiser in ways of strife —
But *man* will be wiser then !



"The r-r-running of the line"

THE PLEASURE OF THE HOUR

WHEN a curtain in the sky,
With the sun a-seeping through,
Is a-taunting me to try
What a fisherman can do—
Would you have me stay at home,
Reading poems in a tome,
While I water at the mouth and live a lie?

For the ringing of the reel
And the rythm of the line
Is the filling of the creel
With the pleasure of the hour when we dine!

I *have* a tender feeling for the fish,
And I 've got to be forgiven for a lot;
But I love 'em all to pieces—in the dish,
And my feeling's sort o' special when
they 're hot.
Oh, the very best of wishes
For the sorry little fishes,
And a hoping they 'll be happy in the pot!

For the r-r-rattle of the reel
And the r-r-running of the line
Is the filling of the creel
With the pleasure of the hour when we dine!

SEAL OF THE NORTH

A GES ago when the Dawn first lifted,
Audrey, you lay in the far lake-land—
Under the pines where the sands were
sifted,
And touched my untouched hand.

Your hair was there as the beach-grass blowing;
Your eyes—and the sea-wet stones were
those;
Your flesh was one with the soft surf flowing,
Your blush with the frail wild-rose.

Your blood was drained from the North-
sun's setting,
Your grace from the vigin-white birch-
tree;—
You breathe with the pure, cool breeze be-
getting
The Spring's sweet ecstasy.



“Through many a truant hour.”

TO a GROSBEEK in the GARDEN

WHEN, through the heaviness and
clamoring throng

Of mortal ways, I hear the mellow song
Of birds—the birds seem sent to me.
If this be my insanity,
As men will measure it—so let it be!

When shadows that no will can drive away
Entomb me—then no sermon blesseth day,
More true and sweet than that pure note
My ear hath caught afloat
From out the garden grosbeak's fervent
throat.

Thou, crimson capéd messenger of God,
Seem'st not to feel the thorned and bitter rod
Of Life—thy hours are joyously beguiled
With melodies so wild!
In sooth, thy creed is *trusting as a child!*

Full knowing that thy living days are brief,
Thou grudgest even an hour for sober grief;
Thy poems are scattered free, without a name,
Nor hast thou thought of fame!
Is *my* unpaid aspiring yet my blame?

The world is wide 'twixt man and worlds
divine,

And hearts are dull to such a song as thine ;
But *I* have heard. Sing on, from tree to tree,
As thou hast sung to me, —
And more shall find the God that guideth
thee !

THE HUMMING-BIRD

WHEN Summer sobs her languor to
the Sky,
And restive spirits vex the ways of
men

In vain emprise; within my garden then
Will I elect to let the world go by,
And watch the humming-bird. Not seen to
fly,

He comes, and vanishes, and comes again
And sips the sweets of honeysuckles when
Their lips are frail—but leaves them not to
die.

So I have thought how good it were to be
This ruthless corsair, bent on such pursuit,
Against the wear of my fore-planning
hours;—

How good it were to live thus liegelessly
Upon the world's unreckoned blossom-
loot—

Yet spare from any harm its guarded
flowers!

A U T U M N

BURDEN banked with many an autumn flower,

The hills of aster, golden-rod and tyme
Exhale the spell of some old Persian
rhyme

Revealed from parchments of the ages'
dower.

The purple mists enshroud the solemn hour,
The throats of Nature hum a requiem
chime ;

The pageant pauses with the dirge sublime,

And Life is laid beneath the burning bower.

When Autumn flaunts her symbols of the
dead,

And darkness trespasses on hours of
light ;

When frosts foray with banners gold and red,
And all the future dawns are robed of
night —

Then quits my soul her habit's clamoring flight

And turns to make her peace and funeral
bed !

Blown by the Winds

*THE sun sets cold on Weicamp Lake,
And the Fall, with her frost-wet mouth,
Summons the drake from his home in the brake —
And the wings of the flock cleave south.*

*The warmth is fled from the bare, brown hills,
And the light from the famished field;
A man's heart fills where the mad crowd wills,
And the town takes over his yield.*

THE COPRID BEETLE

THE dragon drinks at the fount of
noon,

The cicades sing in the tree ;
The night moth sips at the flower-of-the-
moon —

But only a coprid beetle am I,
And a coprid beetle I 'ld be.

They plume and prate of a sun and star,
And the work of a worm called Man ;
But the road to the realm is rough and far.
There 's work in the dark and dirt for me—
I 'll be what a beetle can.

My mother a coprid beetle born —
My sons will be no more.
We work, nor worry — no work we scorn ;
There 's peace in the crypt of the coprid
cave —

What more in the Ultimate Shore?
A Coprid they carved me in agate and gold,
On a Pharaoh's neck I lay ;
They put us away in a vault of old,—
And I carry a text of the Book of the Dead
As I roll my ball of clay !

ST. LOUIS

THE CALL OF THE WINDS

I FAIN would laugh with all the laughing world,

And let the relic memories be furled
With banners of crusades and laid away
With tomes and trumpery of the older day ;
With crooning history, Time's romance, be
done—

Let ages die, and wake the "On and on !"

And yet in dreaming hours, despite my will,
Past friends and fading pictures linger still.
Old wars with all their wrongs, cæsars and
kings

With all their crimes and ancient clamorings,
And troubadours, and pirates of the sea —
Seem still to mock our lauded liberty.

Somehow, when I would tempt the tuneful
strings

I find them fraught with hymns of buried
things—

I hear the cadence of the awkward flail,
And Indians moaning on the bison trail.

The clanking enginery of modern strife
Profanes the obsequies of sweeter life.
There 's grandeur in the press of steam and
steel,

But heart-beats in the throb of oaken keel !

C o n t i n u e d

And on the winds a runic wail of doom
Pursues the tattered sail and trembling boom
Of one-time stately ships. The hulks, all
 mute,
Swing off in funeral pomp; and in pursuit
The squadron hounds of fretful Commerce
 bay
Their greed of wealth and ruthless pride of
 prey !

A golden glory filled the sea and air
When Turner saw the failing Temeraire !
No harmonies contest the sunset fire,
The fondest fancies haunt the Autumn pyre;
So, when the Muses seek the tender theme,
They find the treasure passing toward a
 dream !

NEW YORK

LIBERTY BELL

AH, here is our Liberty Bell,
Paraded in pride of old !
I would that my tongue could dwell
In the turbulent times she tolled.

I would it were mine to reveal,
In a reverent rage of song,
The secrets her sibyls conceal
And the motley and militant throng.
Forgetful of things that be,
I turn to the long-ago —
To the years ere men were free
And the world moved on but slow ;

To the days of ruffle and wig
And leathern-apron and hose ;
Of flint-lock, horn and brig,
And the spirit that went with those.

My mind is peopled of courts
And powder and silk and sword ;
The hound and the falcon sports,
And pride of lady and lord.

I witness the hurrying groups
To the hall of the prophet's light,
And the red and the rags of troops
In the dim-lit streets of night.

But thou, old Liberty Bell,
Attuned to the patriot shout,
Didst ring for a tyrant's knell,
And *ring* till freedom was out!

Now loud shall Liberty sing
Te Deums around her shrine —
And nations bent shall bring
Their altars unto thine!

PHILADELPHIA

JAPAN THE BEAUTIFUL

THE ghost of grace through heathen tides
and times,
Hath kept her vigil 'neath thy trembling
stars!
Thy cherry-blossom cheeks, in peace or
wars,
Beam in rapport with all thy sweetest chimes!
New states may grow where fallen states have
been;—
The pulse of Beauty, dead, shall beat no
more!
Thine not the cause of wall and tower and
store;—
Thy citadels are laid in hearts of men!

PAN-AMERICAN

THE DRAGON CITY

IN this unchanging shaft-light hour by
hour,

Pent in and comfortless, the city's power
Goes grinding on around me; and the sky,
A somber square the empty winds go by,
Scarce marks the transit of the night or day.
A million unfixed spirits take their way
Beneath my keep, nor seem to reckon why
They tempt a dragon, follow far, and die!

I marvel I could quit the peace of fields
For this, where all our fervent sowing yields
But mortal thorns to weave us penal crowns!
I have not learned the tenets of the towns:
I seem disarmed where every man contends,
Denying virtue and rejecting friends!

Where I have wandered, on the northern
hills,

A Presence full of power and promise fills
Our hearts with common joy; and there we
learn

How comradeship and simple trust will turn
The fear of beasts and enmity of men.
But what avails the code I gathered then?—
The God of farther places *here* they scorn,
And flout the solemn faiths that *I* have
sworn!

C o n t i n u e d

Were men but rude, like some unlettered
breed,—

Then might I stand, as one who knew the
creed ;

But here are sinuous ways and sultan smiles,
Soft insolence, diplomacies and wiles.

These subtler crafts plain men can never
know ;

And fall as falls the unresisting snow !

From this most pitiless of human mills

I wonder I am not among the hills,

Whose faithful benediction followed me !

And I am pained of infidelity

At parting from the pines and golden sands

And old-time friends—the warm and rugged
hands

Of long-true friends ! I wonder I should
roam

This way ! My heart is *there*—and there is
home !

CHICAGO



THE GOLDEN SANDS

THE PILGRIM

PALE, pure Star of the North,
I come to thee, burning of passion of
cities;

To thee as to a shrine, I come!
Low, cool mist of the North,
I seek thy inviolable veil—
Within thy frail cloistering walls
Fold me ere I fail utterly.
A slag of man, I come, contrite!
Keen, calm Wind of the North,
Blow out of the hills! I come!
In thy long, cool tresses lay my fevered
brow—

Fevered of cities and of sin!
One touch of thy fingers, Wind of the North,
And I am free—
Free of the purple sin of the South,
Free of the slime of the cities;
Free of the falser gods of crowds!
Stript of all falsity I come surrendering
To thee, deep, blue Sky of the North!
At the fast ship's prow, Star of the North,
In old faith, in old love,
I come, cast down, to thee!

ON SHIP-BOARD

AFTER the TROUBLOUS WINDS

AFTER the troublous winds have wearied and turned to sleep,

I lie on the the cool beach-sands, in the
sound of the waves of the deep ;
And the waves of the firm dead-sea, that carry the gray of the sky,
Bear earnest of peace to me though the years
and the worlds go by.

The waves of the wind-reft bay, that reflect
and reject as they will,
Unvexed and unfaltering roll and the law of
control fulfil ; —
And this is the *life* that will be when our fears
are folded away —
For the mind is the wide-swung sea, and the
sky of the soul is gray.

E N D

ERRATUM—*Pg. 24, line 13 should read virgin-white.*

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